FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BIOMETRICS PILOT PROJECT

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 8, 2001 - U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) announced today in a joint press conference with the U.S. Army and the West Virginia Army National Guard the launch of a biometrics pilot project. The purpose of this pilot is to test various applications of biometric technology.

"This pilot will allow the Army to examine the types of biometric applications that work in a military environment, as well to determine areas where improvements should be made," said Senator Byrd.

The West Virginia Army National Guard located in Charleston, West Virginia, is the first site to implement a biometrics pilot project and is referred as the "Commander's Quick Look" by the Department of Defense (DoD) Biometrics Management Office. This pilot program allows the DoD leadership to see first-hand physical and network biometrics security implementation in a non-tactical environment. The biometrics technologies for the "Commander's Quick Look" pilot will undergo an extensive test and evaluation phase at the Biometrics Fusion Center in Bridgeport, West Virginia, prior to being implemented.

(More)

"The DoD has been working with Senator Byrd to develop a new system to improve information and computer security," said Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command Control, Communications, and Intelligence Art Money. "The DoD's plan is to replace current computer security system passwords with the cutting-edge science for identification and authentication called biometrics. For example, in many of the new computer keyboards there is a small pad that scans a person's thumb to ensure that that individual is authorized to use the computer. Such technology is easy to incorporate when a person is sitting at a desk, however, in a battlefield scenario it gets more complex."

Biometrics refers to the use of unique individual human characteristics as "signatures." A signature can be a fingerprint, the pattern of veins in one's wrist, or the network of nerves in the iris of an eye. A computer network using a biometrics security system, authenticates the user's identity from previously saved patterns or distinguishable human traits.

For more information about the DoD Biometrics Management, contact Nicole Kegler, public affairs officer, at (703) 253-0956 or via e-mail at nkegler@brtrc.com

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